

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA INVITATION: 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL  
WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION**

**WHAT:** Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

**WHERE:** Martin's Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, MD 20770

**WHEN:** 4 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 30.

**RSVP:** Elyzabeth Marcussen at [emarcussen@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:emarcussen@hospicechesapeake.org) or 443-837-1559.

Members of the media are invited to join Hospice of the Chesapeake as we celebrate the day officially designated in the state of Maryland as **Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day**.

This year's celebration features a dynamic list of speakers, including Ravens Head Coach **John Harbaugh**, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary **George W. Owings III** and Army Sgt. Major **Rodwell L. Forbes**, Fort George G. Meade's former Garrison Command Sergeant Major.

This is the third year the State of Maryland will celebrate the commemorative day. Last year, at the request of Hospice of the Chesapeake, legislation was introduced by state Sen. John Astle, D-Annapolis and was the first bill signed into law by Gov. Larry Hogan. March 30 was chosen because it was the day in 1973 when the last troops were withdrawn from Vietnam.

**Preprogram schedule**

4 – 6 p.m. – Doors open to allow Vietnam veterans and guests to visit veterans' resource tables, catch up with or meet fellow veterans and enjoy food and drink. At the entrance to the venue, Veterans will be boisterously greeted by a contingency of active duty military, veterans and volunteers as they are welcomed home and thanked for their service. Members of the media are welcome to roam both outside and in the corridors and the open portion of the ballroom to speak with guests and representatives at the tables.

5:45 p.m. – Speakers and VIP guests arrive. A room on the second floor of Martin’s Crosswinds will be designated for media to find a more quiet area to interview speakers.

6 – 6:10 p.m. – Coach Harbaugh will be in the media room to answer questions.

6 – 6:20 p.m. – Guests will be encouraged to take their seats. Seats will be reserved for media photographers in the front rows. A stand in the rear of the ballroom will be available for video and tripods.

6:20 p.m. – Speakers will make their way to the ballroom.

6:30 p.m. – The program will begin. It is expected to last a little more than an hour.

### **Order of program**

Call to Order	Retired Army Col. Bert Rice
Presentation of the Colors	VVA Chapter 451 Honor Guard
“The Star-Spangled Banner”	Donna Stewart-Moore
Pledge of Allegiance and Welcome	Retired Army Col. Bert Rice
Invocation	Lou Reymann
Retire the Colors	VVA Chapter 451 Honor Guard
Hospice of the Chesapeake	Ben Marcantonio, President & CEO
State of Maryland	Secretary George W. Owings III
United States of America	Retired Army Maj. Gen. James T. Jackson
“America the Beautiful”	Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Gospel Choir
Community	Baltimore Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh
Honor Salute and Moment of Silence	Fort George G. Meade CSM Brian S. Cullen
“Battle Hymn of the Republic “	Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Gospel Choir
United States Military	Army Sgt. Maj. Rodwell L. Forbes
“God Bless the USA”	Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Gospel Choir
Closing Comments	Retired Army Col. Bert Rice

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Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of **Hospice of the Chesapeake**. For more information, please visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org).

**Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration Speakers' Biographies**  
**(in order of appearance)**

**Retired Army Col. Bert Rice -- Master of Ceremonies**

Retired Army Col. Bert Rice, 79, served in Vietnam from 1965 to 66 and 1968 to 69; serving as assistant division aviation officer with the 25th Infantry Division before commanding its Company B, 25th Aviation Battalion. He flew armed helicopters during both stints. A 40-year resident of Odenton, he retired in May after wearing a variety of hats at Fort George G. Meade. He was also assigned to Iran during its revolution in early 1979. Upon returning, he served for three years in the Pentagon before returning to Fort Meade in 1982, where he served with First United States Army. His many tours also included serving as the senior army adviser to the Nevada Army National Guard, Carson City, Nevada. Rice was employed by the Department of the Army at Fort Meade from April 2003 until his retirement. He served as project officer and program manager for several projects, including the Base Realignment and Closure. He served as director of transformation for five years and as the acting director of the Directorate of Public Works for more than a year. The highly decorated Rice also served the Anne Arundel County Council from 1994 to 1998 and as its chair in 1998. He has been married to the former Deanna Swenson for 56 years, with whom he has two sons, Stephen and Kevin, both combat veterans of Desert Shield/Storm.



**Secretary George W. Owings III: On behalf of a Gov. Larry Hogan and a grateful state**

Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary George W. Owings III began his service to his country in 1964 when he volunteered for the Marine Corps. A year later, he arrived in Vietnam and left in 1968 as a sergeant after three tours. Among his awards are the Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Commendation, Navy-Marine Corps Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal. In 1985, at age 40, he re-entered the Marine Reserves and served two years as an active reservist. In 1987 his career in service took a new path when he was appointed by then Gov. William Donald Schaefer to the House of Delegates. He began his first term in 1988. After 17 years, 10 of which were as Majority Whip, Owings left the House to join the Ehrlich administration as the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in 2004. As Secretary, he was responsible for getting legislation passed that restructured



the agency making it more efficient and accountable and for creating the agency's Outreach and Advocacy department. From the beginning, Secretary Owings launched an aggressive initiative to communicate with the state's 480,000 veterans; the majority of them having no connection to the services and benefits available to them. He instituted land transfers for two of the cemeteries where space was crucial and he made sure that burial sites at the other three state owned cemeteries would be sufficient. After a second appointment, he retired in 2007. When Gov. Larry Hogan was elected, Owings was sworn in a second time as the Secretary for the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in February 2015.

### **Retired Army Maj. Gen. James T. Jackson: On behalf of a grateful nation**

Retired Army Maj. Gen. James T. Jackson serves as the Director of The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration.

Jackson initially joined the Commemoration staff in 2012 as a senior adviser, helping to develop partnerships with federal, state and local communities, veterans' groups and other nongovernmental organizations. Jackson's military career began in 1971, as an Army Reserve Officer Training Corps graduate from Kent State University.



Serving in the Army for 32 years, his assignments took him around the world, including postings with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; the 2nd Ranger Battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington; the Republic of Korea; and as an Army ROTC instructor at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. He also commanded a wide variety of Army units, including the 1st Battalion 505th Parachute Infantry at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; the 3rd Ranger Battalion and 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia; and The Military District of Washington/Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region at Joint Base Myer – Henderson Hall. After retiring from the Army, Jackson worked as a senior executive in the public sector for two different companies and participated in a three-month deployment in Iraq to support the Coalition Provisional Authority. He retired from the public sector after eight years.

### **Baltimore Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh: “On behalf of a grateful community”**

Super Bowl-winning Baltimore Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh has led the Ravens to a playoff berth in six of his nine seasons in Baltimore, and in 2012, captured the franchise’s second World Championship. Harbaugh has been an advocate of the U.S. Military. The NFL awarded him its 2013 Salute to Service Award, acknowledging exceptional efforts by those in the league who honor and support military members. In 2012, Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno presented him with the Outstanding Civilian Service Award. Harbaugh took part in the annual NFL-USO coaches’ tour of the Middle East in 2009, has visited numerous military bases in the U.S. and abroad, has purchased school supplies for children whose parents are serving in the military and has sent care packages to troops overseas. In 2008, Harbaugh also helped institute Military Appreciation Day, an annual event that takes place during Ravens training camp. Since its establishment, an estimated 8,000 service members have enjoyed preferred seating and opportunities to meet with Ravens players and coaches each summer. Devoted to his family and his Christian faith, Harbaugh is most active in helping the Baltimore area be better for families. He earned the 2011 “Power of Excellence Award” from the Carson Scholars for “demonstrating excellence in life and being a role model.” Harbaugh lives in Owings Mills, Maryland, with his wife, Ingrid, and their daughter, Alison.



### **Army Sgt. Maj. Rodwell L. Forbes: “Welcome Home on behalf of a grateful military”**

Army Sgt. Maj. Sergeant Rodwell L. Forbes has more than 26 years of military experience, most recently as the Fort George G. Meade Garrison Command Sergeant Major. His many assignments took him around the world, and included participation in Operation Desert Storm/Shield, Bosnia Peace Keeping Mission, Sarajevo Peace Keeping Mission, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Unified Protector in Libya. Highly educated as well as highly decorated, he currently is pursuing a master’s degree in pastoral counseling. Army Col. Brian P. Foley, who



served as Fort Meade's Garrison Commander until August, told *Fort Meade Soundoff!* that he called Forbes "one of the best noncommissioned officers I have worked with in my 26-year career." He and his wife Patricia are actively involved in the Fort Meade community. He plans to retire on June 14 – the date of the Army's birthday. The couple will then relocate to North Carolina.